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Message Text

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20
ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAB-01 SAM-01 IO-10 TRSE-00 FEA-01 INT-05

OES-03 EB-07 ACDA-05 /099 W
---------- 070418
R 180605Z APR 75
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3217
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1414

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SY, IZ, TU
SUBJ: EUPHRATES RIVER DISPUTE

REF: DAMASCUS 1350

1. MFA AMERICAN DIRECTOR TOLD EMBOFF APRIL 16 THAT TURKEY AND SYRIA PRESENTLY NEGOTIATING PACKAGE OF AGREEMENTS COVERING VARIOUS AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT, AND THAT ONE OF THESE IS TREATY DIVIDING EUPHRATES RIVER WATERS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. SOURCE ADDED THAT TURKEY HAD PREVIOUSLY CONCLUDED EUPHRATES TREATY WITH IRAQ, AND THAT ONLY REMAINING LINK IS SYRIAN-IRAQI ACCORD. SOURCE BELIEVES SYRIAN-TURKISH TREATY DIVIDES WATER ON EQUITABLE BASIS, APPROXIMATELY ONE-THIRD TO EACH COUNTRY. EUPHRATES TREATY HAS NOT YET BEEN INITIALED BY EITHER PARTY BECAUSE BOTH SIDES
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RESERVING ACTION UNTIL OTHER COMPONENTS OF PACKAGE

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AGREED UPON. BUT TURKEY, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, HAS BEGUN TO LIMIT ITS WATER DIVERSION PROGRAM TO QUANTITY STIPULATED IN AGREEMENT.

2. SOURCE WENT ON TO STATE FLATLY THAT SARG HAD "CUT" WATER TO IRAQ, THAT SYRIA DID NOT NEED TO FILL ITS RESERVOIR AND THAT SYRIAN FARMERS IN EUPHRATES VALLEY WERE SUFFERING AS RESULT OF DECISION AS WELL AS IRAQIS. SARG DECISION WAS INTENDED AS MESSAGE TO IRAQ TO KEEP OUT OF SYRIAN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS IN CASE IRANIAN-IRAQI ACCORD AND COLLAPSE OF KURDISH RESISTANCE LEFT REGIME WITH TIME ON ITS HANDS TO FOMENT MISCHIEF IN SYRIA.

3. COMMENT: SOURCE'S COMMENTS, IF TRUE, UNDERCUT SARG PUBLIC POSITION THAT DISPUTE IS "TECHNICAL MATTER" NOT SUBJECT TO "POLITICAL DISCUSSION" AT ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING. SARG MAY IN FACT HAVE ENGINEERED WHOLE EUPHRATES FLARE-UP WITH IRAQ TO PROMOTE DOMESTIC UNITY IN FACE OF THREATS FROM "IRAQI DEVIL" DURING BAATH PARTY CONGRESS, A PERIOD WHEN CRACKS IN ALLEGEDLY SOLID WALL OF DOMESTIC HARMONY MOST LIKELY TO REVEAL THEMSELVES. AGREEMENT WITH TURKEY COULD PROVIDE JUSTIFICATION FOR TURN AROUND, HOWEVER, IF SYRIA DECIDES TIME NOW OPPORTUNE TO REACH SETTLEMENT OF EUPHRATES ISSUE WITH IRAQ.
PELLETREAU

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NNN

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